

CASE STUDY:

Guaranteed Ride Home

**Peace of mind when
you need it most**





Creating Peace of Mind with Guaranteed Ride Home Programs

Flexibility and security when the unexpected happens

Every day as each of us prepare to head out the door, we think about daily plans, where we need to go, and the best way to get there. Heading to the office followed by a concert on a dry day? It's a great day to ride a bike. Going to work downtown with a mid-afternoon dentist appointment nearby? The bus is the best option.

But sometimes, life happens – suddenly you get a call midday that your child is sick and needs to be picked up from school across town, or you get asked to work overtime unexpectedly and your bus is

no longer running when you get out of work.

When illness or emergencies happen, we all want to know we can get where we need to go quickly and safely. That's the benefit of a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program. GRH offers emergency taxi or other ride services to get you home when you or a family member has an unexpected emergency on days you didn't drive alone to work.

The worry-free benefit

In the 2024 Seattle Commute Survey, one of the top reasons people cited for driving alone to work was family care or other obligations. A Guaranteed Ride Home

program gives your employees the confidence to leave their car at home. When employees know they have access to a taxi or other ride service in case of personal and family emergencies, they feel more comfortable trying other options.

Guaranteed Ride Home programs – also known as Free Ride Home or Home Free Guarantee – can be set up in-house or through an established service.

Read on to learn how KPFF and the City of Seattle support their employees' peace of mind with a Guaranteed Ride Home benefit and how you can get started with a program of your own.

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KPFF: Home Free Guarantee made easy with ORCA

KPFF Consulting Engineers provides their team with an unlimited-use ORCA card through the ORCA Business Passport program. This makes it easy for employees to choose transit for both work and non-work trips.

ORCA Business Passport includes access to King County Metro’s Home Free Guarantee (HFG) program at no additional cost. Through this program, every employee can request up to 8 free trips home from work per year, if emergencies or unexpected late work make them miss their normal transit or carpool home.

With Metro’s Home Free Guarantee, taxi rides are requested through the HFG dispatch line. Having a Home Free Guarantee program helps KPFF employees confidently choose to commute by transit.

The Employee Transportation Coordinator for KPFF says:

“We recognize that one of the biggest barriers to using public transportation for our employees is the concern about how to get home if an emergency occurs or you’re asked to work late unexpectedly. This is especially true for our team members who live outside of the city, when traveling during off-peak hours is more difficult due to transit schedules and fewer alternatives. The Home Free Guarantee program alleviates these concerns by providing a reliable backup ride, which reassures our employees and promotes transit use.”

KPFF makes sure their team knows about the Home Free Guarantee program through regular communication. Program information and instructions are available on their intranet, posted in break rooms, included in

their employee transportation brochure, and covered during new employee orientation

Ideally, employees never have to use this benefit, but when they do, they’re glad it’s there:

“When a family member had a medical emergency, I had to quickly get back home on a day that I had taken the bus to work. It was very comforting to be able to access a safe and quick ride through the Home Free Guarantee program, especially when I was feeling worried during a stressful situation.”

– Dawna, KPFF employee



City of Seattle: In-house Program

The City of Seattle provides a Guaranteed Ride Home program in-house through their MyTrips program. Like Metro's Home Free Guarantee program, MyTrips has certain requirements for what situations qualify for a reimbursable free ride home. Rides are available to employees who did not drive alone to work and can be used for personal and family

emergencies and unexpected late work. Weather and traffic-related incidents, cancelled trains, and pre-scheduled appointments or work do not qualify for this benefit.

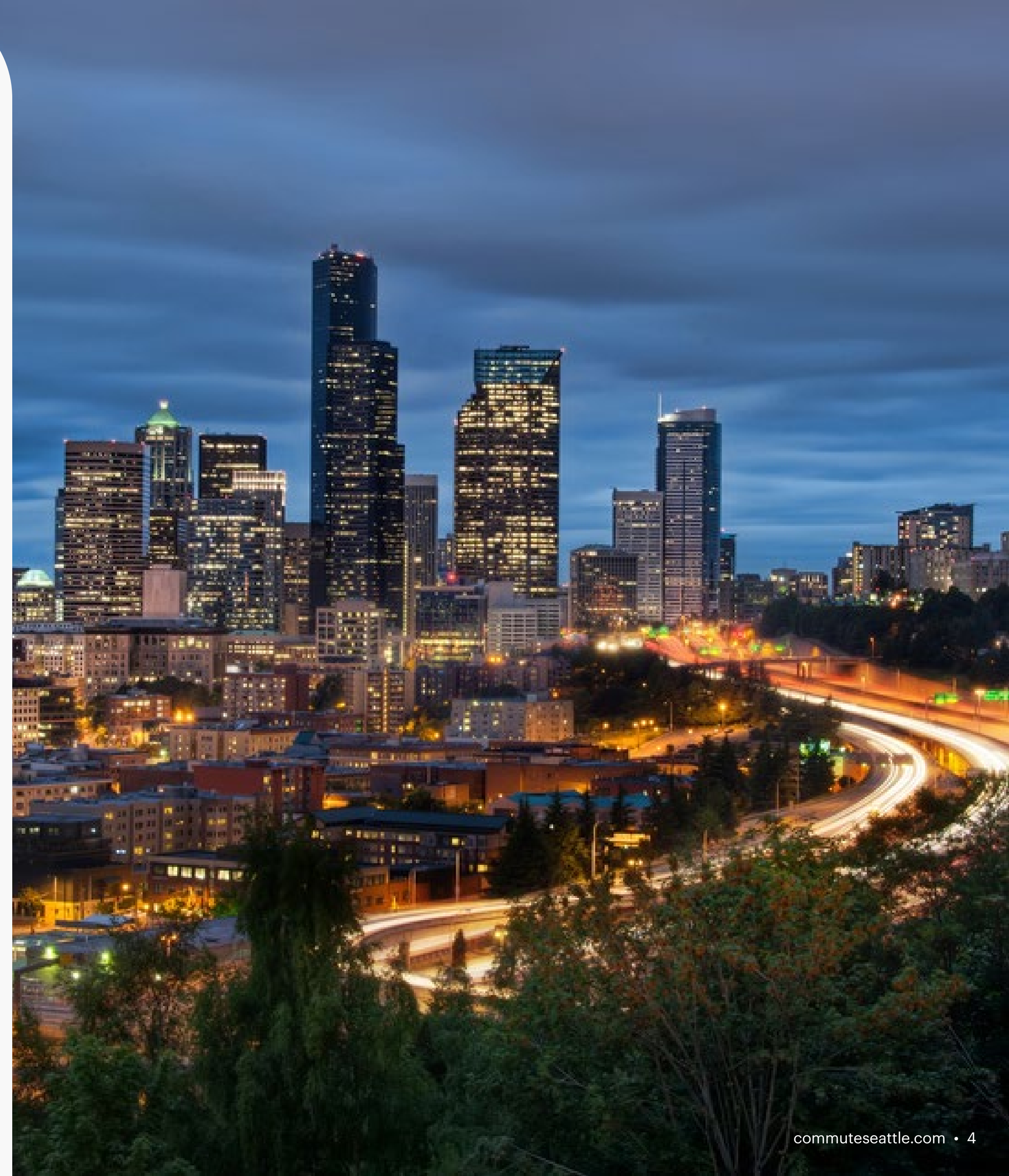
The City has continued to adjust their program based on internal feedback, including allowing their employees to hail an Uber or Lyft in addition to yellow cab, and implementing driver tip reimbursement.

Future improvements include expediting the reimbursement request process by shifting from paper forms to an electronic system.

In 2024, the City of Seattle covered 25 rides through their Guaranteed Ride Home program, helping their team continue to use various modes of transportation while knowing there is a reliable and safe way to return home if the unexpected happens.

"My team works 24/7, including holidays and weekends. Employees sometimes must cover odd shifts or work overtime without warning. The Guaranteed Ride Home program lets me and my coworkers confidently take public transit to work – including Sounder Trains, which only run during peak commute hours – knowing that we have a reliable backup to get home when we unexpectedly have to work overtime or a later shift."

– Kyle, City of Seattle Employee



How to start a Guaranteed Ride Home Program at your worksite

A Guaranteed Ride Home program is like insurance – you hope you never have to use it, but you’re glad it’s there when the unexpected happens. Alleviate worry and encourage your employees to commute via bike, transit, or carpool/vanpool by creating your own Guaranteed Ride Home program.



STEP 1: Confirm if your ORCA Business Account provides Home Free Guarantee Coverage and decide which option is right for you

If you already provide your employees with an ORCA Business Passport benefit and you have fewer than 500 employees, you have access to HFG at no additional cost! HFG can be added on to ORCA Business Passport contracts for employers with over 500 employees and to businesses providing a transit pass through the ORCA Business Choice program.

If you prefer to set up your program in-house, consider setting up a direct contract with a rideshare (Uber, Lyft) or taxi company to ease the request and reimbursement process. Various benefits management companies also offer third party service for guaranteed ride home programs.

STEP 2: Create a program policy

Include information about:

- Who can request a ride – People who took any mode of transportation to work other than driving alone
- What situations qualify – Free rides are available for unexpected and unplanned emergencies or overtime work
- How you get a ride – Include instructions on how to call King County Metro’s Home Free Guarantee dispatch line to request a ride. If you’re developing your program in-house, decide if employees can call a taxi, request a Lyft or Uber, or request use of a company-provided vehicle.
- Where you can go and if you can stop along the way, such as picking up a sick child from school
- How to request reimbursement and if driver tips are included
- How many rides a year employees can request

STEP 3: Communicate your program to your employees

Share your program with employees when they onboard, in your employee handbook, on internal intranets, and in break rooms.

Need support navigating your options? Commute Seattle can help! Email your questions to us at info@commuteseattle.com

